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*Eng. Poetry vol 63*

M O N O D Y

(AFTER THE MANNER OF MILTON'S LYCIDAS)

ON THE

D E A T H

OF

MR. LINLEY;

Who was drowned AUGUST the 5th, 1778, in a CANAL at  
GRIMPSTHORPE, in LINCOLNSHIRE, the SEAT of his  
GRACE the DUKE of ANCASTER.

He must not flote upon his watry bier  
Unwept, and welter in the parching wind,  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

MILTON.

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L O N D O N :

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M. O. N. Y.

D. E. A. N.

M. R. I. N. Y.



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# M O N O D Y.

**A**H me! what mean these melancholy strains?  
Why thus depressive sounds Apollo's lyre?  
Why from Caliope's once cheerful brow  
Is fled her wonted fire?  
Why in that pensive posture does she sit,  
Her lute, the source of melody, thrown by?  
And ev'ry Muse, through sympathetic woe,  
Her pleasing task forego?  
Ah why?  
Cried Thyrsis, as he drove at even-tide  
His flock near Helicon's enchanted side,  
On their return from the Bæotian plains,

A

On

Towards their fold—Say, aged shepherd, say,  
 What dire event has happen'd, since, this morn,  
 I sought the eastern plains with sprightly feet,  
 Aurora's earliest streaks to meet?  
 Then all these hallow'd groves were blithe and gay,  
 The shepherds tun'd their oaten pipes with glee,  
 And ev'ry wood return'd the rural melody.  
 The Muses, on the summit of the hill,  
 Of scientific pleasures took their fill;  
 Nor did the laurell'd-god, bright Phœbus, scorn  
 Their placid joys to share,  
 Or drink with them of Hippocrene's fam'd rill.

Hast thou not heard? reply'd the hoary sage,  
 Hast thou not heard the tidings Fame has brought  
 From sea-girt Britain's distant shore?  
 Britain the seat of ev'ry useful lore,  
 Of ev'ry art that e'er Apollo taught,  
 And each fair science of each skilful age.  
 Thrice happy isle! with these and freedom blest'd,  
 Chief of the northern realms she stands confess'd.

Forgive



Forgive me, swain, that thus on Britain's praise  
 I dwell, unmindful of the question'd tale ;  
 My tongue reluctantly thy call obeys  
 To speak the woe that overspreads the vale.  
 You knew Linlæus ! ah ! who knew him not ?  
 Once, once the pride and treasure of these plains,  
 Caliope's lov'd son, by Sol begot,  
 The blitheft, sweetest of Arcadian swains.  
 Orphæus himself, though sprung from the same fire,  
 Whose harmony could melt the iron heart  
 Of hell's stern monarch, and with wond'rous art,  
 His triple-headed watchman lull to sleep,  
 Touch'd not with greater skill the warbling lyre.

And yet, alas ! (these aged eyes will weep)  
 Although endow'd with such celestial pow'rs,  
 Though he could boast an origin divine,  
 Though few as Hebe's were his circling hours,  
 Th' unsparing Fates cut short his vital thread,  
 And, breathless, now he lies on a cold wat'ry bed.

This

This morn, so Fame reports, th' ill-fated youth,  
 Sported upon a glassy lake, which lies  
 Within th' extensive boundaries  
 Of noble Ancastr's paternal seat,  
 In a gay bark, but ah! how void of truth!  
 For tho' she look'd so gay, so trim, so neat,  
 Unfaithful to her trust, she yielded soon  
 To the rough blasts of Æolus, and e'er noon  
 Betray'd her treasure to his unseen foe.

That blust'ring god had oft with envy heard  
 The praises justly giv'n to young Linlæus;  
 He oft had heard the soft melodious sounds,  
 Which from his lyre his dext'rous fingers swept;  
 He felt their magic pow'r, and wept.  
 But soon this forc'd applause to rage gives place;  
 His tortur'd heart with jealousy rebounds;  
 And much his hated rival's lyre he fear'd  
 Would his own harp excel,  
 And all his sweet aerial tones efface.  
 No sooner, therefore, did he see the boat,  
 Proudly upon the limpid surface float,

Than

Than calling every rude wind to his aid,  
 Upon her side the faithless skiff he laid,  
 And thus aveng'd his blasted fame.

Exerting all Leander's nautic skill,  
 Awhile th' intrepid swain withstood his foe ;  
 Till by the high-rais'd waves o'erpower'd, and spent,  
 He sunk beneath the boist'rous element ;  
 He sunk to rise no more.

Would it had happ'd on Neptune's wide domains !  
 Some dolphin basking on the briny plains,  
 Arion-like, had borne him to the shore.

Relentless god ! could nought thy rage abate !  
 Why do I ask ? since well I know, that hate,  
 Nor time nor merit ever can remove  
 From minds which war for empire, fame, or love ;  
 Else would the heav'nly notes he breath'd around,  
 When, like Timothæus, in the bark he sat,  
 Persuasive have been found ;  
 Have calm'd thy wrath, and gain'd a gentler fate.

Nor would the veneration justly due  
 To the great owners of the sacred spot,  
 Have been forgot.  
 How couldst thou thus, with breath so rude,  
 Amidst such princely bowers,  
 Or near such stately towers,  
 To execute thy fell designs, intrude ?  
 Or how disturb the peace of such a pair ?  
 He best of men, the fairest of the fair :  
 More for their virtues than their rank rever'd ;  
 By nobles, vassals, artists, all belov'd,  
 And e'en to royalty itself endear'd.

But what was rank, or worth, or skill to thee,  
 Inexorable deity !

His sister's plaintive notes would not avail,  
 Tho' sweeter the fam'd Syrens could not boast,  
 When wise Ulysses near their fatal coast  
 Spread his advent'rous sail,  
 By triple chains, and prudence bound,  
 To guard against the madd'ning sound.

Nor



Nor could the lay of Thalia's fav'rite son,  
 Who late the comic laurel-wreath has won  
 On Britain's stage,  
 A cruel rival's enmity assuage,  
 Or save a much-lov'd brother from his rage.  
 Altho' alike their years, tho' side by side,  
 (By Hymen and the Muses both ally'd)  
 To reach the summit of Parnassus' hill  
 They oft, with sure and speedy steps, had try'd,  
 And nearly gain'd, such their unequall'd skill !

His mortal father, wild with grief,  
 Throws round his full-fraught eyes, and seeks relief.  
 Surcharg'd with woe, he cherishes despair,  
 And hardly yields to draw the vital air ;  
 His harp neglected lies, which would have charm'd  
 A less obdurate foe, and all his ire disarm'd.

Each son of genius on Britannia's plains  
 Laments the loss of young Linlæus' strains.—

But

But see, cry'd Thyrsis, see where Fame again,  
 Upon the mountain's lucid brow alights ;  
 The news she brings, perchance, might ease our pain ;  
 For sometimes to alarm with groundless fears,  
 The babbling dame delights ;  
 Uncertain, oft, in haste she wings away,  
 And rumours, falsehoods, vain chimæras bears ;  
 And oft her tongues, in the same hour, unsay  
 The tale which just had caus'd unceasing tears.  
 Hark ! hark ! Apollo's lyre gives livelier notes ;  
 The Muses all a gayer aspect wear ;  
 And on the bosom of the balmy air  
 Serenity once more sedately floats ;  
 That wild distraction, which so lately spread  
 Its dreary influence around, is fled.

Listen, Menalcas, list awhile, and tell  
 What glad intelligence the goddess brings ;  
 For thy retentive memory can well  
 Each interesting circumstance retain ;

By

By time and much experience render'd sage,  
Thou canst on pleasing themes the mind engage,  
Or gloss the incidents that threaten pain.

The tidings which the welcome goddess brings,  
Reply'd the sage, are such as tend to clear,  
From our dejected hearts, each harrow'd trace,  
From the full eye dispel the starting tear,  
And ev'ry gloomy frown with smiles replace.

As the young swain, the cause of our late woe,  
Skim'd o'er the lake in the gay faithless boat,  
A band of beauteous Naiades gather'd round,  
Enraptur'd with the music of his lyre,  
And play'd in wanton mazes to the sound ;  
Nor less the shepherd than his song admire.  
But when they saw his fatal overthrow,  
And on the waves his breathless body float,  
They ceas'd their sport, and in their snowy arms  
Convey'd him to their marble-paven hall  
Beneath the lake; where, free from further harms,

C

They



They gently laid him on a mossy bed,  
 And with aquatic flowers rais'd high his languid head.  
 Then with officious haste, well pleas'd, they strive  
 By scented oils from fragrant gums distill'd,  
 And nectar'd baths with potent simples fill'd,  
 To keep the glimm'ring vital spark alive ;  
 And next his scatter'd spirits to recall,  
 They drop into each duct and avenue,  
 That to the senses lead, ambrosial dew,  
 More friendly far to life, more cordial,  
 Than Helen's fam'd exhilarating draught.  
 With joy they saw their efforts pow'ful prove,  
 And all in secret wish to gain his love.

No less young Linlæus joy'd to find his fate thus chang'd.  
 Awhile, in wonder lost, around he gaz'd ;  
 The fretted crystal roof he view'd amaz'd,  
 And o'er each sparkling gem his eye-balls rang'd.  
 But when his head he rear'd,  
 And saw of lovely nymphs so fair a herd,  
 Transported he arose, and snatch'd his lyre,

Which



Which from his grasp nor wind nor waves had torn ;  
 Inflam'd with all his radiant father's fire,  
 And on the wings of fancy, tow'ring, borne,  
 He rais'd such heav'nly sounds, as ne'er before  
 Old Terra's vaulted rocks had heard ;  
 Save when of Yore,  
 The first of minstrels, and of lovers, dar'd,  
 Leaving the cheerful realms of day,  
 Thro' her long winding caves to make his way,  
 His lost Eurydice to regain.

The nymphs, entranc'd with the sweet melody,  
 A brilliant circle form around the swain ;  
 And with their kindest looks repay  
 His pleasing, pow'rful, heart-felt lay.

Above the rest pre-eminently stood  
 The gardant Naiad of a neighb'ring flood,  
 Yclep'd Trentea ; as the lily fair ;  
 Braided with pearls, her amber-dropping hair  
 In wanton ringlets o'er her shoulders spread,  
 And wreaths of various flowers adorn'd her head.

Who,

Who, as she listen'd to the stranger's song,  
 Unwonted transports felt within her breast ;  
 That deity, whose universal sway  
 Th' immortal pow'rs as well as men obey,  
 Whilst she attentive stood, with a swift dart,  
 Through the translucid stream, had pierc'd her heart.  
 Sincere and innocent, the nymph, e'er long,  
 The newly-kindled, virtuous flame confess'd ;  
 And gave to the transported youth her hand.  
 The fair companions of th' accepted maid,  
 In soft confusion for a moment stand ;  
 Each heav'd spontaneously a tender sigh,  
 And wish'd that such had been her destiny.  
 But these unkind emotions soon subside ;  
 They cheerfully their gratulations paid,  
 And with their wonted love beheld the envy'd bride.  
 Her agat chariot studded o'er with gems,  
 Which waited on the margin of the stream,  
 Bore to her crystal grot the happy pair ;  
 Where, rapt in nuptial bliss, they fondly dream,  
 Nor fear th' approach of love-destroying care ;

There,

There, happy shall they live devoid of pain,  
And mutual harmony for ever reign.

Menalcas thus, to the enquiring swain,  
In artless numbers told his varying tale;  
And Thyrsis, joyful, left the sacred vale,  
To fold his flock on the adjacent plain.

The sisters of the dear translated youth  
Warble once more their vocal melody,  
Like the sweet Sirens three;  
But not the Siren-song, or wanton glee,  
They only sing of virtue, love, and truth.

Again Thalia's fav'rite son  
Pursues the task so well begun;  
And, nightly, by his chaste dramatic page,  
At once improves, and charms a liberal age.

The bard, who in these simple Dorick lays  
Has strove to speak a much-lov'd shepherd's praise,  
To other strains returns; well pleas'd should Fame  
With one so eminent record his name.

T H E E N D.



There, happy shall they live devoid of pain,  
And mutual harmony for ever reign.

Meanwhile thus, to the expiring strain,  
In antick numbers told his varying tale;  
And Thyrsis, joyful, left the sacred vale,  
To fold his flock on the adjacent plain.

The sisters of the dear translated youth  
Warble once more their vocal melody,

Like the sweet Siren thrice;  
But not the Siren song, or wanton glees  
They only sing of virtue, love, and truth.

Again Thais's favorite son

Pursues the task so well begun;  
And, nightly, by his chaste dramatic page,  
At once improves, and charms a liberal age.

The bard, who in that simple Dorick lay,  
Has strove to speak a much-lov'd shepherd's praise;  
To other strains returns; well pleas'd should fame  
With one so eminent record his name.

T H E E N D



